55 YEARS OF YOUR TRUST
HAROON OILS LIMITED
Producers of quality automotive and industrial lubricants.
Head Office: 021-32314066-8 Regional Office: 042-35757759
email: hol@haroonoils.com | www.haroonoils.com

DAWN

55 YEARS OF YOUR TRUST
HAROON OILS LIMITED
Producers of quality automotive and industrial lubricants.
Head Office: 021-32314066-8 Regional Office: 042-35757759
email: hol@haroonoils.com | www.haroonoils.com

SC orders return, restoration of refugee camp land

• Rejects plea by KP commissioner for Afghan refugees; orders department to clear the land and pay compensation
• Holds that farmland acquired in 1983 must be returned to owners in the same condition

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court affirmed on Wednesday the right of landowners in Chitral to receive their agricultural land — which was initially acquired in 1983 for setting up a camp for Afghan refugees — in its original condition.

The court also upheld the compensation, due to the landowners, at the rate of Rs600 annually per unit 108 sq ft — a unit of land locally known as Chakoram.

Headed by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi, the three-judge bench dismissed an appeal by the Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and upheld a Feb 27, 2025, decree by the Peshawar High Court Circuit Court Chitral requiring the government to clear the land and pay rent for the property, leased since 2005.

The ruling centres on a controversy that began when the commissioner rented land in 1983 from Sardar Abdul Ghani Khan and Khalil Ahmad, residents of Kaisoo village in Darosh tehsil. The land was acquired to establish a camp for Afghan refugees, and mud houses were constructed to house them.

Although the camp was vacated in 2005, the Supreme Court was told the remains of the mud houses and other debris were left behind in semi-constructed form.

In its judgement, the high court had observed that the leftover material should have been removed by the commissioner and the land should have been handed over in the same condition — i.e. fit for agricultural use — as it was when acquired.

The court noted that because the construction material prevented the owners from utilising the land for farming, compensation was justified.

The high court regretted that the department, "instead of removing the material and debris used for the construction of the mud houses ... opted for litigation".

Justices Shahid Bilal Hassan and Shakeel Ahmad joined the chief justice in affirming that lower judicial forums had rightly awarded compensation.

The courts set the rate at Rs600 annually per Chakoram, from 2005 until the land is cleared and returned to the owners.

Advocate Zartaj Anwar, representing the commissioner, argued in the appeal that the high court had erred by awarding compensation past the 2005 evacuation date.

The appeal further contended that the rate of Rs600 lacked "evidentiary support or reference to statutory guidelines".

The petitioner also claimed the lower court violated the principle of "res judicata" under the Code of Civil Procedure by allowing the owners to pursue a fresh claim on a matter that had already been adjudicated.

But the Supreme Court rejected these arguments, finding that the basic facts regarding the damage to the property were admitted and established in earlier litigation.

MANSEHRA: Tourists enjoy snow in the scenic Shogran valley on Wednesday as sub-zero temperatures gripped the region.—PPI

Govt fails to name regular food secy, assigns additional charge

• Industries and production secretary to handle affairs until full-time appointment • PARC chief's nomination also hangs in balance ahead of key Pak-China moot on farming

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: After failing to appoint a full-time national food security secretary, the government on Wednesday assigned the post as an additional charge to an official already serving at the same position in another portfolio, until a regular one was arranged for the ministry.

Retired Captain Saif Anjum, a grade-22 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service, presently serving as industries and production secretary, has been assigned the additional charge of the national food security and research secretary, in addition to his existing duties, for a period of three months or until the posting of a regular one, with immediate effect.

Amir Mohyuddin, a grade-21 officer of the Secretariat Group who was posted as the additional secretary of national food security and holding the current charge of the ministry, has been transferred and directed to report to the Establishment Division with immediate effect.

The ministry, which is primarily responsible for policy formulation, economic coordination, and planning for food grains and agriculture, has witnessed frequent changes at the secretary level. Its current minister is Rana Tanveer Hussain.

The ministry is still in the process of finalising a national wheat policy, the processfor which started months ago.

Wheat sowing for the 2025-26 Rabi season has already been completed, as the ministry faces the massive task of handling the upcoming crop with an interim policy.

The last full-time national food security secretary was Waseem Amjad Chaudhry, whose tenure lasted for nearly a year before he was transferred to parliamentary affairs ministry.

Before Mr Chaudhry, retired Captain Muhammad Mahmud, Zafar Hassan, Omer Hamid Khan, and Hashim Populzai served as food security secretary over a period of six years.

While the ministry is struggling to have a regular secretary, the appointment of a full-time chairman of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) hangs in the balance as well.

PARC chief

A summary for the appointment of a regular PARC chairman, following completion of the selection process, is ready to be sent to the prime minister's office.

However, until the appointment of full-time PARC is finalised, the affairs of the apex agriculture research body are being managed by the national food security ministry.

In the meantime, the national food security ministry is organising the Pak-China Agriculture Investment Conference in Islamabad on Jan 19. The conference is expected to lead to the signing of joint ventures and partnership agreements between public and private sector entities of the two countries.

The upcoming conference has been described by the ministry's officials as a defining platform for Pakistan-China agricultural cooperation — uniting sustainable practices with cutting-edge innovation.

Imaan, Hadi seek to make ISPR chief a witness in tweets case

Prosecution provided copy of application; hearing to resume today

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: Human rights activists Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha submitted an application with an Islamabad court on Wednesday, seeking to summon the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) chief as a witness, in a case registered against them over their social media posts.

In the case, registered under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (Peca), the two have been accused of inciting divisions on linguistic grounds through social media posts and creating the impression that the armed forces were engaged in terrorism within the country.

On Wednesday, the couple submitted a written application to Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka, who is hearing the controversial tweets case.

The duo claimed that during the presser, an attempt was made to influence the ongoing criminal trial, as the press briefing was broadcast "on all national media, and the content is readily available online".

According to their application, DG ISPR Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry made remarks that were "highly prejudicial" and had the effect of undermining their constitutional right to a fair trial.

Appearing in court, Ms Mazari-Hazir claimed that the DG ISPR implied she was a foreign agent during his press briefing.

She described it as a deliberate attempt by a government functionary to influence public perception, as well as judicial proceedings.

The court subsequently directed that a copy of the application be provided to the prosecution and said a decision on the request would be made after it heard the other side.

Later, the court said it would issue a decision on the application after the statements of the accused were recorded under Section 342 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

During Wednesday's proceedings, prosecution witness Shahroz Riaz was also cross-examined. He made several admissions regarding the manner in which the inquiry in the case was initiated and the collection of social media content.

The hearing has been adjourned till Jan 8.

Keeping opposition posts vacant 'recipe for disaster', warns Raza Rabbani

Says parliament incomplete as long as both slots remain vacant; raises alarm over 'silencing of dissent'

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Senate chairman Raza Rabbani has called on the custodians of the Senate and National Assembly to appoint opposition leaders in both houses of parliament, pointing out that leaving the posts vacant is a "self-made disaster in a hybrid democracy".

The posts have been lying vacant since August last year when then-opposition leaders in the NA and Senate, PTI leaders Omar Ayub and Shibli Faraz, were disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) following their conviction in cases related to riots on May 9, 2023.

The PTI has nominated Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai as the opposition leader for the NA and Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen's Allama Raja Nasir Abbas for the Senate slot, but their notification remains pending.

Mr Rabbani pointed out, "Parliament is incomplete," adding that "this exposes a contradiction in our democracy".

"We talk of the supremacy of parliament, yet less inclined to uphold this principle," he added.

Mentioning that the political system was already strained by polarisation, the former chairman of the Senate said the NA speaker and Senate chairman should, under the rules, appoint leaders of the opposition, "as leaving the offices vacant sidelines dissent. Such steps go towards weakening parliament, a self-made disaster in a hybrid democracy," he asserted.

As far as the appointment of the opposition leader in the NA was concerned, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq recently said that the process would be initiated afresh after meeting with PTI Chief Whip Amir Dogar, who called on him to discuss the unusual delay in the opposition leader's appointment.

The development came around a month after the NA Secretariat sent a letter to the PTI chief whip, seeking details about the status of cases concerning Mr Ayub.

The letter said the provision of details in writing was necessary for completing the process for appointing an opposition leader in the lower house of parliament.

Mr Ayub had challenged his disqualification in the Supreme Court, but withdrew his plea in October last year, and the election on the seat that fell vacant due to his disqualification was also held and won by a PML-N candidate.

Balochistan traders seek NOCs to procure local sugar

By Muhammad Akbar Notezai

QUETTA: Sugar dealers and traders in Balochistan have alleged that they have been forced to sell imported sugar, while the sale of domestically produced sugar has effectively been restricted, asking the provincial government to restore the issuance of no-objection certificates (NOCs) for transporting sugar from other parts of the country.

Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, Central Anjuman-i-Tajran Balochistan President Abdul Rahim Kakar and Balochistan Sugar Dealers' Association President Syed Abdul Rehman Shah warned that if the issue was not resolved within a week, the buying and selling of sugar across the province would stop as the demand was met by procuring sugar from mills in Punjab and Sindh in the absence of any sugar mill in Balochistan.

They alleged that for some time, traders in Balochistan were forced to sell imported sugar, with the result that consumers were compelled to purchase sugar at higher prices.

The traders' leaders said the current price of imported sugar is Rs175 per kilogram, while the ex-mill price of locally produced sugar was around Rs140 per kg, creating a price difference of about Rs40 per kg that ultimately burdens consumers.

They added that imported sugar had comparatively lower sweetness, making it less acceptable to consumers.

Besides, they pointed out, transportation costs from the port city of Karachi to Quetta and other parts of Balochistan were significantly higher, directly impacting both traders and the public.

In contrast, freight costs from sugar mills in Sindh are relatively lower. They added that due to higher sweetness, consumers in Balochistan generally prefer locally produced Pakistani sugar.

The leaders said Balochistan's traders have already purchased and sold their allotted quota of imported sugar, yet they are now being compelled to buy an additional 50,000 to 60,000 tonnes of imported sugar lying at Karachi Port.

They said they had met the chief secretary and officials of the industries department to inform them that imported sugar was pushing prices higher for consumers, but no tangible progress had been made.

NDMA starts work on preparedness for monsoon

ISLAMABAD: A nationally mandated initiative — aimed at enhancing the safety, resilience, and long-term sustainability of the country's public infrastructure through a preventive, risk-informed approach ahead of monsoon — was officially launched here at National Disaster Managememt Authority's headquarters on Wednesday.

The launch was marked by a seminar held to review and audit vulnerable public infrastructure and buildings.

The initiative is aimed at ensuring coordinated nationwide implementation of the Infrastructure Audit Programme 2026 by bringing federal and provincial stakeholders onto a single platform.

At the seminar, the NDMA presented the approved concept note establishing the national framework for the Infrastructure Audit Programme, which has received formal endorsement from the Prime Minister's Office for implementation across both federal and provincial levels.

ISLAMABAD: A national seminar on the Infrastructure Audit Programme 2026 is underway at the NDMA headquarters.—PPI

Pakistan has repeatedly incurred heavy human and economic losses due to floods, earthquakes, and climate-induced disasters, said Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada while addressing the seminar as chief guest.

He said the losses were largely attributable not only to natural hazards but also to vulnerable and inadequately prepared infrastructure. He emphasised the urgent need to transition from a reactive, post-disaster response model to one focused on early identification of structural weaknesses and timely mitigation.

Mr Pirzada commended the NDMA for initiating this forward-looking programme in the national interest and said the Infrastructure Audit Programme represented a paradigm shift from response to prevention and from assumptions to evidence-based decision-making.

He said that systematic infrastructure health assessments under the programme would help identify risks in critical buildings, safeguard public assets, and enable informed planning and investment. He reaffirmed his ministry's complete support to the NDMA in advancing the national initiative.

Speaking on the occasion, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik said the seminar aimed to initiate coordinated nationwide implementation of the Infrastructure Audit Programme 2026 by bringing federal and provincial stakeholders onto a single platform.

He said the focus was to build a shared understanding of the audit framework, clarify roles and responsibilities, and align strategies and timelines to ensure systematic assessment and strengthening of critical infrastructure across the country during disasters and natural calamities.

Participants were briefed on the programme's rationale, scope, and phased implementation plan, including prioritisation of high-occupancy and high-risk buildings, adoption of standardised audit methodologies such as visual inspections and non-destructive testing, development of digital reporting and decision-support systems, and incorporation of resilience indicators into infrastructure planning.

The seminar was attended by senior officials from federal and provincial governments, representatives of building control and development authorities, technical experts, engineers, academia, and development partners.—APP